



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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VIRGINIA'S WHEAT PRODUCERS EXPECT HIGHER YIELDS

The 2004 wheat crop is expected to total nearly 9.77 million bushels, according to the initial season forecast just released by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. If realized, producers will harvest 33 percent above last year's 7.36 million bushels but 6 percent below the 10.37 million bushels produced in 2002. Producers in the Commonwealth are expected to harvest 155,000 acres of wheat that will yield an average of 63 bushels per acre, 17 bushels per acre above 2003 but equal to 2002.

In general, small grains are looking good with minimal insect pressure being reported. The majority of the wheat crop is in fair to excellent condition.

U.S. WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION DOWN 9 PERCENT FROM 2003

U.S. winter wheat production is forecast at 1.55 billion bushels, down 9 percent from 2003. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 44.2 bushels per acre, 2.5 bushels less than last year. Grain area totals 35.1 million acres, down 4 percent from last season. Hard Red production is down 14 percent from a year ago to 910 million bushels. Soft Red is up 5 percent and totals 399 million bushels. White production totals 242 million bushels, down 9 percent from a year ago.

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